

# The Holy Christian Church

The Book Of Ephesians

Matthew 16:13-19 Ephesians 4:1-6 Isaiah 49:5-7

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In the **NICENE CREED**, we confess that we believe in the **One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church**. The Church is made up of people; *the Church is all believers of all times and of all places*. It is every single person who believes and confesses like Peter: *“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”*

The Greek word “**Church**” in the New Testament means the “*called out ones*”. Through faith in Christ, God has *called you out* of the sinful world, and brought you **into** His Kingdom. Through faith in Christ you have been brought into an *assembly* of other believers in Christ. We *gather around* the **Holy Things** that create and strengthen our faith: that is, God's Word and His Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. The Lord works through His Word and the Sacraments to keep your faith strong, healthy, and growing.

When the Lord called you to faith and brought you into His Church, He gave you the **gift of unity and peace**. In the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church, God's people are **united** and live at **peace** with God and each other. This gift of **unity and peace** is priceless; and as individuals we are to do nothing to hinder or disrupt that unity and peace. Here's how St. Paul talks about it in the book of Ephesians:

Be eager to **treasure and hold fast the unity** of the Spirit through the bond of **peace**.  
Ephesians 4:3

*Treasure and Hold Fast.*

That is what we are to do with God's gifts of **unity and peace** that we have as members of the Holy Christian Church.

Our **unity** is that we all trust in Christ and His work of salvation that brings us **peace** with God.

Our sins are forgiven; our guilt is removed; and we have a home in heaven. Our **peace** with God creates peace with each other – **unity** in our faith, our doctrine, and our relationships with each other. We are to *Treasure and Hold Fast* the **unity and peace** we have in Christ.

This unity is a gift from God; and it is His work in His Church. **The problem is that your sin can break the unity and disrupt the peace.** The **peace and unity** of the Christian church is disturbed when you . . .

- ✘ Indulge in or encourage false doctrine
- ✘ Listen to or support false teachers
- ✘ Create strife between people in our congregation
- ✘ Live an openly sinful life
- ✘ Give a conflicting witness to the world
- ✘ Biblically illiterate
- ✘ Doctrinally unsound

We are to *Treasure and Hold Fast* the **unity and peace** we have in Christ.

**Our unity is that we all trust in Christ and His work of salvation that brings us peace with God.**

If you are doing something breaks that unity or disrupts the bond of peace, then stop! Repent! Confess it to God! And be renewed in the forgiveness of sins!

We are to *Treasure and Hold Fast* the **unity and peace** we have in Christ. In Ephesians, St. Paul goes on to further define what our unity and peace looks like.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is **one Body and one Spirit**, just as you were called to **one Hope** when you were called; **one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all.** Ephesians 4:3-6

St. Paul lists **seven gifts** that unite us as a congregation in the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church; **seven gifts** that create peace among God's people.

## One Body

This refers to the “Body of Christ.” This is a common description of the *Holy Christian Church* in the New Testament. Christ is the Head of the Body and His people are His body. Just as our human bodies are one and work together; so to Christ’s Body is one and it works together. There is a unity and a peace in the “One Body” – the Body of Christ.

## One Spirit

The One Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit, Who has called us to faith through Word and Sacrament and continues to work to sustain that faith throughout our lives. Not only has He done that for you; but He is also doing it for all believers in Christ. The Holy Spirit unites us as a congregation in the Holy Christian Church; and He has given us peace with God and creates peace amongst us.

## One Hope

Our one Hope that we share is the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. We will all live together in the perfect Kingdom of Heaven where there will be no sin, no strife, and no discord. In Heaven there will be perfect unity and perfect peace. Since we share this hope of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting, we live in peace and unity now during our lives.

## One Lord

In the middle of the list of the seven gifts is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Lord. He is our One Lord has done the work of salvation for us; He has forgiven us our sins through His death and resurrection; He has treated us all as equals when He rescued us from sin and death. His cross and His resurrection creates the peace and unity that we share as a congregation in the Holy Christian Church. Our “One Lord” is not only the center of this list of seven gifts, but he is the center of everything in the Christian faith and life!

## One Faith

The one faith is not your personal faith; but rather the Christian faith: the Body of Doctrine, the truth of God, and the teachings that the Lord has revealed to us in Holy Scripture. The truth of Holy Scripture is what unites us as a congregation in the Holy Christian church. That is why any step in the direction of false teaching and false doctrine is not only an offense to Christ, but it disrupts the peace and unity He has given to His Church on earth.

## One Baptism

We have all been baptized; it is the place where Christ claims you as His own; and where you are publicly identified as one of the Elect of God. In Holy Baptism you were brought into the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church; and you were given the gifts of the One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, and One Faith. Holy Baptism unites us as a congregation in the Holy Christian Church. If you or your family have not been baptized, then let's talk – because it is very important. Its one of the gifts of unity and peace in the Holy Christian Church!

## One God And Father Of All

Finally St. Paul reminds us that we all share the same Father in Heaven. We are part of His family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We all can boldly approach our Father in Heaven and look to Him for all good things and to turn to Him in times of trouble. God the Father's love and care is something that we all share together; and it unites us as a congregation in the Holy Christian Church, and creates peace among us.

**One Body**  
**One Spirit**  
**One Hope**  
**One Lord**  
**One Faith**  
**One Baptism**  
**One God And Father Of All**

These seven gifts unite us as a congregation in the Holy Christian Church; these seven gifts create peace with God and peace among His People.

May you do everything you can to *Treasure and Hold Fast* the **unity and peace** we have in the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church. Amen!

May Almighty God and the Father of our Lord Jesus grant the grace of His Holy Spirit so that we may all be one in Him and steadfastly remain in this Christian unity, which is well pleasing to Him! Amen.

*Formula of Concord, Epitome, 23  
Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*